

No. 1

CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

"His eye was meek and gentle, and his smile
 lay on his lips; and in his words was heard
 eternal sweetness, dignity and love.
 The compassion gleamed in his eyes,
 and his language goodness." —

Cover

Vol. I. DECEMBER, 1832. No. 12.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATION.

Sermon on the close of the year	415
EXTRACT	
Self-denial necessary to enter Heaven	429
Encouragement to Prayer	430
The Last Day	433
The decision of the general assembly is reversible	434
Serious admonition	436
The importance of teaching children their total selfishness	439
Humility	441
Self-examination	444

ANECDOTE

Happiness	447
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POETRY

Judgment	449
Rich Man and Lazarus	450

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1833

THE
CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

Great day ! for which all other days were made ;
For which earth rose from chaos, man from earth ;
And an eternity, the date of Gods,
Descended on poor earth-created man ;
Great day of dread, decision and despair !
At thought of thee each sublunary wish
Lets go its eager grasp and drops the world ;
And catches at each reed of hope in heaven.

Young.

VOL. I. DECEMBER, 1823. No. 12.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

Sermon on the close of the year.

*But the end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober,
and watch unto prayer.*—I. PETER, 4, 7.

Some suppose, by the end of all things, is meant the hour of death. Some suppose, by the end of all things, is meant the complete ruin coming upon the Jewish church and state. But others more justly suppose this phrase denotes the end of the world, or the final dissolution of this material system. The context favors this construction. For the apostle there exhorts christians to shun the examples of loose and profligate sinners, " who he says, shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and dead." And upon this, he mentions the end of all things, which we know is nearly connected with the general judgment. Besides, this epistle of Pe-

ter is directed not in particular to the christians in Judea, but to christians in general all over the world, who could not be supposed to be very much interested in the destruction of Jerusalem and the fate of the Jews.—In every view, it is most natural to understand, by the end of all things, the end of the world, which will deeply affect both saints and sinners, at all times and in all places; and which renders it highly proper and necessary for all to live a sober and prayerful life. “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.” These words suggest this plain and serious truth to our present consideration:

Since the world is coming to an end, it concerns every body to prepare for it. I shall,

I. Show that the world is coming to an end;

II. Show that it concerns every body to prepare for it; and,

III. Show what preparation is necessary.

I. Let us consider, that the world is coming to an end. We find all the objects around us mutable and liable to corruption. The flowers fade, the herbs wither, the trees die; the mountains gradually fall and fill the valleys; the waters wear the stones; and the rust corrupts iron and brass, silver and gold, and the hardest metals, which have ever been found. Every thing material appears to be subject to decay. And if we may reason according to analogy in this case, it is natural to conclude, that this world carries in it the seeds of its own dissolution. Besides, philosophers tell us, that according to the laws of gravitation, there is a constant tendency in this earth, and in all the bodies, which compose the solar system, to verge nearer and nearer to the sun, until they actually fall into it, and are destroyed by it.—But there is no occasion of having recourse to reason or

philosophy upon this subject ; the bible is a more sure word of prophecy respecting the end of the world.— There we find,

1. That the world was made for a certain use. According to the account of the creation in the first of Genesis, the sun, moon, and stars, and the earth with all its furniture, were made for the service of man. As soon as God had made the world, he gave mankind the use of it, and the dominion over it. Man was not made for the world, but the world for man. Accordingly the Psalmist says, “ The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord’s : but the earth hath he given to the children of men.” The earth was formed for the support and comfort of the human race. These purposes it has served near six thousand years ; and shall continue to serve as long as it exists. So God assured Noah after the flood. “ While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” “ While the earth remaineth,” this mode of expression carries the idea, that the world will not always remain, but will finally be dissolved.— And if it was made for the service of mankind, we may presume it will continue no longer, than it is necessary to answer this original and valuable purpose. But, as soon as the work of redemption is completed, the day of probation is finished, and all whom God has given to Christ are called in, and made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, God will have no occasion to continue men on the earth, and consequently no occasion for upholding the world. When, therefore, all the elect are called in, and the world has completely answered the purpose for which it was made, we may justly conclude, it will be totally destroyed. When the house is built, the staging is useless, and must be taken

down. When there are no actors to be found, the theatre is useless, and is not worth preserving. So when all the actors on the stage of the world have finished their parts, and completely formed their character for eternity, it is to be expected, that He, who made, will destroy the world. And now it is to be observed in the next place,

2. This natural conclusion of reason is abundantly confirmed by the plain declarations of scripture. In explaining the parable of the tares and the wheat, Christ says, "the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one. The enemy that sowed them is the Devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As, therefore, the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be *in the end of the world.*" And in the 24th of Matthew, Christ says again, "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness, unto all nations; *and then shall the end come.*" In both these passages, there is a plain intimation that the world shall not only come to an end, but come to an end as soon as all the vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath are completely formed.—And the Apostle Peter represents the world as coming to an end, immediately after the gospel has had its effect upon mankind, and prepared both the penitent and impenitent for the day of judgment. He says in the words before the text, "for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." He then subjoins: "but the end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." And in his second epistle, he undertakes to refute the false notion of some, who said

the world never would come to an end; and he expressly declares, that the world shall be burnt up, as soon as the great and extensive scheme of redemption is completed, and all mankind are prepared for this final doom." He says, "knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days, scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they are willingly ignorant of, that, by the word of God, the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word, are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is, with the Lord, as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which, the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat: the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up.— Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God, wherein, the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" Thus the sacred writers tell us when, and how, and for what purpose, the world shall be destroyed. They connect this with another well-

known and infinitely more important event: this is, the day of judgment, which shall unfold the characters and fix the conditions of all accountable creatures. It is as certain, therefore, that this world will finally come to a dissolution, as that it was made for man, and as that men are accountable creatures, and shall finally be judged according to their works. Hence,

II. It concerns every body to prepare for this great and interesting event. So the Apostle teaches: "The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." This is an exhortation to prepare for the end of the world. And that it does seriously concern every body to prepare for it, will appear, if we consider,

1. That every body will be a spectator of this closing scene. Though neither Adam nor any of his posterity saw the *creation* of the world, yet they will all see the dissolution of it. This appears to be the representation of scripture. When Christ left the world, two angels told the spectators of his ascension; that he should return to it again in the same visible manner in which he was raised out of their sight. "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Paul represents Christ as coming again to this world in a visible manner. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then, we

who are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them, in the *clouds*, to meet the Lord in the *air*.”—And John gives a similar description of Christ’s second coming. “Behold, he cometh *with clouds* ; and every eye shall see him : and they also who pierced him : and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.”—According to all these representations, Christ will come to judgment, while there are *clouds* and *air* ; and consequently while the earth is standing. All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of Christ, and come forth ; and all that are alive shall be changed, and both the quick and the dead shall ascend between the earth and the heavens, and there be judged. And *thus* cometh the end of all things. From this, it appears, that all the human race will be spectators of the final conflagration. As the world was created in the view of the morning stars, so it shall be destroyed in the view of angels, men and devils. The whole intelligent creation will stand and see the great closing scene. And since every one of us, and every one of Adam’s race, from his eldest to his youngest child, shall be present, and personally behold the complete and final dissolution of the world, it seriously concerns every soul to prepare for the astonishing event. For,

2. The destruction of the world will deeply and eternally affect every human mind. Every spectator of the amazing scene will be most sensibly interested. The end of the world will draw after it most serious and extensive consequences. It will put a final period to the pyramids of Egypt, the walls of China, the palaces of princes, and all the cities of Africa, Asia, Europe and America. The flames, which consume the world, will consume all the productions of poets, of politicians, of philosophers and divines. All the monuments of human

power and art will be laid in ruins. The end of the world will put an end to the houses, the gardens, the fields, the treasures, the ornaments, and the amusements of all, who pursue these lying vanities. When the world ceases, kings and kingdoms will cease, and all human distinctions come to an end. The servant will be free from the master, the child from the parent, the subject from the ruler; and all the endearing relations and connexions of life, be forever dissolved. Such a scene of universal desolation must necessarily affect the eye and the heart of every spectator. The Apostle John, as some suppose, has given us a figurative, but an awfully sublime description of the dissolution of the world, and of the views and feelings of mankind on that great occasion. "And I beheld when he opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.— And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth—and the heaven departed as a scroll, when it is rolled together: and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains: And said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Whether we consider this as a description of a falling city, or of a falling nation, or of a dissolving world, it strikingly illustrates the deep and lasting impression, which the end of the world will make upon every human heart. Now, if all mankind will be present to see the earth destroyed, and if the sight will be so deeply affecting to all, then it certainly concerns

every body to prepare for the solemn scene. Whether it be ten days, or ten years, or ten thousand years distant, it is equally real and important, and calls for great preparation. This leads me to observe,

III. What every body must do, to prepare for the end of all things, which is at hand. And here,

1. It naturally occurs, that every body must cordially approve of that great and glorious design, which will be accomplished at the end of the world. The Apostle tells us, that God created the world to answer his eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. He formed the scheme of redemption from the early days of eternity; and he made the earth and all that is in it, to be the means of carrying into effect this great and important design. Accordingly, he means to uphold the world, until Christ has finished the work of redemption, and then he intends to destroy it. Hence we read, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's, at his coming. *Then cometh the end*, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." It will be pleasing to all, who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and who approve of the work, which he has undertaken, to see it accomplished. They will be willing that the world should be burnt up, when it has answered its purpose, and the glory of God requires it to be annihilated. But the destruction of the world must be distressing, beyond description, to all who are not friendly to the end it has brought about. Hence it is impossible, that any one of mankind should be prepared for the end of the world, without heartily embracing the gospel, and sincerely desiring that God should be glorified, and Christ should be admired, by all those that love them, at the

end of all things. But a cordial approbation of the design of God, and the conduct of Christ, in the scheme of redemption, will prepare any person to stand, and see the world consumed, with great solemnity, and real enjoyment.

2. Every one must *expect* and *desire* the end of the world, in order to be prepared for it. It is as desirable, that the world should come to an end, as that the purpose for which it was made, should be accomplished.—There has no event hitherto taken place, so desirable as that which is to take place at the end of the world.—Hence there is no one previous event so desirable as the final consummation of all things. Accordingly the Apostle exhorts Christians to *be looking for* and *hasting* unto the day of God, when the material heavens shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.—Job, the ancient patriarchs, and the primitive Christians, all lived in joyful hope and expectation of the end of the world. They comforted one another with the delightful prospect. And John, the beloved disciple, closes the canon of scripture, with a cordial welcome to the promise of Christ's last coming. "Surely I come quickly," says Christ—"Amen," says John, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

It is easy to see, that those, who sincerely desire the end of the world, are prepared to behold, and rejoice in the important event.

3. Every one must disengage his heart from the world, by placing his supreme affections upon things above, in order to be well prepared for the end of the world. So long as men love the world, the love of the Father is not in them, and they cannot bear the thought of the eternal loss of earthly enjoyments. No man can bear to see an object he loves and values consumed in

the flames. But when men renounce the world as their chief good, and take God for their portion; then their treasure lies in heaven; then their hearts are there; and then they are not afraid of those flames, which cannot reach their durable riches and righteousness, laid up in the kingdom of their Father. Hence the Apostle exhorts Christians to take this method, to prepare for the coming of Christ. "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things *above*, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, shall appear, *then* shall ye also appear with him in glory." Those who have not placed their happiness in the things of the world, are prepared to see it destroyed; for its destruction cannot shake the foundation of their hopes, nor take away the source of their felicity. I may add,

4. It belongs to a due preparation, for the end of all things, which is at hand, to live under an habitual sense of that most *solemn*, as well as *glorious* event. To this the apostle exhorts in the text, "*Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.*" A realizing sense, that the fashion of this world is passing away, that all its scenes are vanishing; and that the day is at hand, when this whole globe shall be laid in ashes, cannot fail of solemnizing every attentive mind. Such a prospect is calculated to make men sober in spite of their hearts: and to give themselves unto prayer. How often have some of mankind thought the world was coming to an end? And how often has this thought thrown them upon their knees before God? Where is the man, who would cast off fear and restrain prayer, if he realized the end of all things to be at hand? The end of the world will be a solemn

scene, and all who are to be present and deeply interested in it, ought to live soberly, watchfully, and prayerfully. They ought to cultivate just such feelings, as the end of all things ought to inspire. Their latter end will be awfully solemn, and this they would, if wise, habitually consider. It is the whole business of their lives to prepare for the end of the world; and therefore they ought to carry about with them an habitual sense, that this world is to be burnt: they are to see it, and feel the effects, to all eternity. Let everybody, therefore, be sober, and watch unto prayer, that that day may not find them unprepared.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If this world is coming to an end, and all mankind are to see it and survive it, then it is an unspeakable blessing to be favored with the Bible. Without it, we could not know the beginning, continuation, nor end of the world. This strikingly appears from the late conduct of an otherwise enlightened nation, who ordered this inscription to be set up in their grave yards—*"Death, an eternal sleep!"* But if this be not true, then all the dead shall awake and see the end of the world.—And both reason and scripture warrant the belief and the assurance, that all mankind shall exist, after the world shall end, and shall exist forever. They, who are favored with the Bible, have every possible advantage and inducement to become joyful spectators of the closing scenes of earth and time. But without the Bible, no person could know that the world shall end, or be prepared for that most important and affecting event.—The Bible then is a blessing of unspeakable importance.

2. If the world is coming to an end and all mankind are to be spectators of it, then they have to pass through much more solemn scenes, than any of them have yet passed through. Some have seen large and populous cities laid in ashes. Some have seen large armies engaged upon sea and upon land. Some have seen an army plunged into the sea. And some have seen the whole world overwhelmed by a flood. These were solemn scenes. But they were nothing in comparison to the scenes, that lie before every one of the human race. They have yet to hear the last trump, to see millions rise from their graves, and stand spectators of a dissolving world.

3. If mankind are to see and survive the destruction of the world, then they, who do not prepare for it, are very stupid. They are indeed more stupid than other created beings. Angels and devils have the end of the world constantly upon their minds and are deeply affected by it. But mankind think and feel and speak and act, as if this world would never end, and as if they should live in it forever.

4. If this world is coming to an end, and is calculated to make men serious, how greatly is it abused! How was it abused by men before the flood! They were vain and thoughtless until they were destroyed from the earth. And mankind have naturally and generally conducted in the same manner in all past ages. In the same manner they now conduct in places, where the end of the world and the design of its existence and continuance are known.

5. If this world is to be destroyed, how vain are all earthly enjoyments. They are good for nothing in themselves. God views them so, and they will be found to be so by all mankind.

6. Since this world is to be destroyed, they, who renounce the world and embrace the gospel, are the only persons, who act wisely. All other persons are unwise. For what will a man be profited, if he should gain the whole world and lose it? and also lose his own soul?

7. Since this world is coming to an end, how important is time. Time began and will end with the world. And upon this limited and momentary period, God has suspended all the interests of eternity. As men are in time, so they will be forever.

8. Is the end of the world such a serious and important event, then death is to all persons a serious and important event. For at death the world ends in respect to every person who dies. At the moment of death all persons become wholly disconnected with this world.

9. Does the world's coming to an end call upon all persons to prepare for it? Then it calls upon all persons to be truly religious. Though men may imagine they are prepared to be in this world without religion, yet they cannot suppose they are prepared to leave it without being truly religious. The obligation to be religious is continually pressing upon all persons. For the world is every day coming to an end in respect to those that die. And our fellow-creatures continually die in every part of the world. To many thousands, who have died this year, the world has come to an end. And the coming year will doubtless close the eyes of as many more upon all worldly scenes. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment!" "The end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer."

EXTRACTS.

Self-abasement necessary to enter
Heaven.

Nothing short of real, cordial self-abasement can qualify any of our sinful race to obtain and enjoy the happiness of heaven. Many have desired and endeavoured to get to heaven, without performing the mortifying duty of self-abasement. The Pharisee who went up to the temple to pray, trusted in himself that he was righteous, and should obtain salvation, by his mere external duties of religion and morality. Paul once built his hopes of heaven upon his blameless, beautiful, self-righteous conduct. But the Pharisee was rejected, and Paul was disappointed.

It is utterly in vain for impenitent and unhumbled sinners to hope, that any of their desires, or prayers, or self-righteousness will qualify them for the favour and enjoyment of God. Every thing they say, desire, or do, while destitute of humility, is nothing but self-exaltation, which is diametrically opposite to a holy and heavenly spirit. God knows the proud afar off, and will never admit them to dwell in his presence. Sinners must be clothed with humility, before God will exalt them to his heavenly kingdom, and before they can possibly be happy there.

It is therefore the present indispensable duty of all self-righteous and self-confident sinners to humble themselves before God. Upon this necessary and condescending condition, he will save them from ruin and exalt them to glory. And surely those who have injured and of-

fended him, by their groundless disaffection to his character, and disobedience to his law, ought to humble themselves deeply before him, and plead for his pardoning mercy. And if they will only give up all their self-righteous and self-justifying pleas, and humbly cry with the poor publican, "God, be merciful to us sinners," he will hear, and answer, and save them. But if they continue to exalt themselves, he will effectually humble them. He has appointed a day, in which he will expose all their turpitude and guilt to the view of the whole universe. He has appointed a Judge to condemn them, and doom them to everlasting shame and contempt. And to complete their humiliation, he has appointed a song of triumph to be sung over them to all eternity. And can their hands be strong, or their hearts endure, in the day that God shall thus deal with them? No, they must sink down into everlasting despair. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, who will render vengeance to his enemies, and reward them that hate him!

Encouragement to Prayer.

Saints have great encouragement to abound in this duty. They are formed for this devout and holy exercise. Having become the children of God, they possess the spirit of adoption, which is the spirit of grace, and supplication. It was said of Saul of Tarsus, as soon as he was converted, "behold he prayeth." Prayer is the proper business of good men, who have the greatest encouragement to call upon God, without ceasing. Jacob wrestled with God and prevailed. And God has never said to the seed of Jacob, "Seek ye me in vain." Their

prayers are always heard and accepted, even though the things they pray for be not immediately, nor eventually granted. But besides this, there are many other motives, which ought to prevail upon all good men to abound in the duty of prayer.

Let them consider, in the first place, that this duty is very generally neglected. Though all men ought to pray, and not to faint; yet how many cast off fear and restrain prayer before God? How many rise up and lie down, go out and come in, without acknowledging God in any of their ways? How many are so averse from prayer, that nothing but some threatening danger, or pressing calamity, can bring them to the throne of divine grace? How many prayerless families, and prayerless persons, are to be found in every place? This melancholy reflection ought to animate the few friends of God in the world, to cry mightily for themselves, and for thoughtless, guilty, perishing sinners.

Let them consider, in the next place, the peculiar pleasure to be found in devotion. When do saints enjoy more of heaven upon earth, than while they are drawing near to God, and unbosoming themselves to their heavenly Father? What divine satisfaction did Job, David, Daniel, and other devout men enjoy, while they were fervently praying for the peace and prosperity of Zion? Prayer naturally fixes the attention upon the character, the conduct, and the designs of the Deity, and upon all those great and amiable objects which are suited to gratify every holy and devout affection.—Jacob never enjoyed a happier season, than while his whole soul was vigorously wrestling with God in prayer. God is ever ready to reward those, who call upon him in sincerity, with the peculiar manifestations of his love.—

And this is certainly an animating motive to pray without ceasing and without fainting.

Let them consider, in the third place, that humble, fervent, constant prayer will give them life and spirit in the performance of all other duties. They will meditate, they will read the word of God, they will hear the gospel preached, they will attend divine ordinances, they will pursue their secular concerns, and converse with their fellow-men, very much in the same manner, in which they call upon God. If they maintain a daily intercourse with the Deity, and sincerely implore his gracious presence and assistance, they will find themselves ready to every good work, and exhibit an amiable example of virtue and piety to all around them.—They will most certainly live as they pray.

In the last place, let them seriously consider that constancy, sincerity, and fervency in prayer, will be the best means to prepare them for dying. It is the natural tendency of this duty to inspire the mind with clear and realizing views of invisible and divine objects. It is principally by prayer, that saints familiarize the scenes, which lie beyond the grave, and prepare for an easy and joyful transition out of time into eternity.—Hence we find the ancient patriarchs spent their last moments in prayer. The last words of David were employed in thanksgiving and praise. Stephen died calling upon God. And the great Redeemer expired in the act of praying. Those, who live prayerfully, are prepared to die prayerfully. And who would not wish to leave this world, and appear before God, in a praying frame?

The Last Day.

The last day will be a most solemn and important event. If it should bear a proper proportion, in point of solemnity and importance, to the time and means employed in preparing for it, it will unspeakably surpass, in solemnity and importance, all other scenes which ever have taken place, or ever will take place, in time or eternity. Accordingly the apostle, with peculiar propriety and emphasis, calls it THE GREAT DAY. The circumstances, the business, and the consequences of it, will all unite to render it solemn and interesting beyond the present conception of men and angels. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which, the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; and the earth shall be burned up. The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth. Then shall the Son of man sit upon the throne of his glory, with all the holy angels with him, and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats upon the left. Then the books, which contain the records of time and eternity will be opened. Then every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, will be brought into judgment. Then whatever had been covered, shall be revealed; and whatever had been hidden shall be made known. Then the hidden things of darkness, and the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed. The sins of the righteous, as well

as the sins of the wicked, shall be made manifest ; and whatever had been done in heaven, in earth, and in hell, shall be exhibited and published before the whole universe. This solemn process will be closed by the sentence of the supreme Judge, who will say unto them on his right hand, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But he will say unto them on the left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." While these shall go away into everlasting punishment, the righteous shall enter life eternal. Such will be the final separation between holy and unholy angels ; between holy and unholy men ; between holy and unholy parents ; between holy and unholy children ; between holy and unholy friends, which must excite the highest joys and sorrows, and the keenest sensibilities in the hearts of the happy and the miserable that can be conceived !

The decision of the general judgment irreversible.

Origin supposed, that there will be an everlasting series of changes and revolutions in the characters and conditions of moral beings. And some ingenious and learned divines have since supposed, that notwithstanding the sentence of condemnation that shall be passed on the devil and all impenitent sinners at the great day, they will still be in a probationary state, and after they have suffered severely for a longer or shorter period, they will be purified, and prepared for a restoration to the favour and enjoyment of God forever. But the pre-

parations, which God is making for the day of judgment, are a plain and visible refutation of this unreasonable and unscriptural sentiment. Why should God employ such a long space of time, and such a vast variety of means and instruments, to prepare all moral and accountable creatures for the account they are to give at the great day, if they are afterwards to have a more decisive and final trial? The reason, which the apostle gives for God's being so long before he brings on the day of judgment, is, that he may give sinful creatures a sufficient space of repentance, so that they may all be prepared for that great day of decision. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; *but is long suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*" This passage plainly implies, that God will bring all those sinners of mankind to repentance, whom he intends to save, before the day of judgment. And hence we may justly conclude, that if he intended to save any or all of the fallen angels, he would also bring them to repentance, before the general judgment comes. But we are expressly told, that they will be reserved in chains of darkness till that day arrives, and then will be doomed, with the finally impenitent of mankind, to everlasting punishment. Besides, God cannot prepare all things for the general judgment, until he has actually obtained his ultimate end in creation. Then, and not till then, he can vindicate his own character and conduct in the view of all intelligent beings, which is the principal reason, why a general judgment is proper and necessary. Without calling the whole intelligent creation together, he could not convince every individual, that he had treated not only him, but every other creature, perfectly right.

But the process of the last day will fasten a conviction upon the minds of both the friends and enemies of God, of the perfect rectitude of all his purposes and operations from the beginning to the end of time. Hence the design of the general judgment, as well as the long and vast preparations making for it, leave no ground to expect, that there ever will be a review or rehearing of the case of those, who shall then be condemned to suffer the due reward of their deeds. If any one indulges this absurd and fallacious hope, let him hear the solemn admonition of Him, who holds the keys of death and of hell in his hands, and who openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth.—“Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him : lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.”

Serious Admonition.

The decisions of the final judgment, loudly admonish all persons of all ages and conditions, to live a holy and devout life. This is the plain and practical inference which the apostle draws from this solemn subject.—“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens be-

ing on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Wherefore, beloved brethren, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."— This exhortation applies with equal force and obligation to all men, whether rich or poor, high or low, bond or free. They must all eventually meet together and stand upon a level before the judgment seat of Christ, where neither riches nor honours, nor talents, nor any of the boasted distinctions in this world, will have the least avail to gain the approbation of their Judge. The day of grace, which they now enjoy, is the most important period of their existence. All their eternal interests are suspended upon their conduct in this short and uncertain life. If they repent, and believe the gospel, and live soberly, and righteously, and godlily in this present evil world, they may look for the blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. But if they abuse their time, their talents, their wealth, or their influence, in corrupting themselves and others, they will treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. These are the terms upon which they shall certainly be accepted, or rejected in the great day of decision. Let none deceive themselves. "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." It is the most important business of all men in this world, to prepare to meet their Judge in peace. He has committed the care of their souls to themselves, and pointed out the path

they must pursue and the duties they must practise, to secure his favor, and obtain that crown of righteousness, which he has promised to all those, who love his appearing. They ought to feel and act as the primitive christians did in their probationary state. "Wherefore we labor, that whether present or absent from the body, we may be present with the Lord and accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." The ungodly cannot stand in judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. Their hearts cannot endure, nor their hands be strong, in the day that God shall deal with them. They will find it to be a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. When the slothful servant was condemned and cast away, there was weeping and knashing of teeth. When the man without the wedding garment, was bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness, there was weeping and knashing of teeth. And Christ has told all the finally impenitent, that there shall be weeping and knashing of teeth, when they shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets sit down in the kingdom of God, and they themselves shut out.

The importance of teaching sinners their total selfishness.

It is highly necessary to explain and inculcate the total selfishness of sinners. They never will believe, that they are totally depraved, until they see wherein total depravity consists. They are very apt to think, that their intellectual powers are as good as those of other men, and that they sometimes, at least, employ them in as amiable and virtuous a manner. This leads them to disbelieve and deny the doctrine of total depravity. But let them be taught, that total depravity consists in total selfishness, which is a free and voluntary exercise, that belongs to the heart and not to the understanding, and they can no longer disbelieve, or deny that they are totally depraved. For they must know from their own experience, that selfishness has reigned in their hearts, and constantly led them to regard their own good, more than the good of others, or the glory of God. And as soon as they are convinced of the total selfishness of their hearts, they will be equally convinced of their total depravity. This shows the importance of explaining and inculcating the entire selfishness of sinners. There is no other truth so directly calculated to fasten conviction on their conscience, and to throw them into the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity. As soon as they come to realize, that they have always acted from mean, mercenary motives, in all they have done for God, for themselves, and for others, their former goodness, and their former hopes built upon it, entirely vanish, and they see no ground of dependence, but only the undeserved and unpromised mercy of God. This was the case of Paul under a realizing sense of his total selfishness. When the divine law was brought

home to his conscience, his sins revived and the ground of his hope gave way. For he realized that he had always been governed by mere selfish motives in his conduct, which was expressly forbidden, by the precept, "Thou shalt not *covet*;" that is, "thou shalt not feel, nor express the least degree of selfishness." It is in vain to preach about total depravity, without explaining it; for nothing will convince sinners, that they are totally depraved, until they are made to see and feel the total selfishness of their hearts. This Christ knew, and therefore, not only taught total depravity, but made it appear to be total selfishness. It is not the name, but the thing signified by total depravity, that will carry conviction to stupid, self-righteous, and self-deceived sinners. Upon this subject, it is impossible to be too plain and explicit. It is necessary, to teach sinners the nature and criminality of selfishness, not only to convince them of their guilt and danger, but also to convince them of their immediate and indispensable *obligation* to perform every duty, which God has required them to perform. As soon as they see and feel, that they are totally selfish, they cannot help seeing and feeling, that they have no excuse for the neglect of duty, but are under immediate and indispensable obligations, "to turn from all their transgressions; to make them a new heart and a new spirit; to repent and believe the gospel; and to walk in newness of life." When they clearly see and sensibly feel, that all their depravity and criminality consists in their free and voluntary exercises of selfishness, they can no longer plead it as an excuse for impenitence and unbelief, because they know, that it depends upon their own choice, whether they shall love, or hate God;—whether they shall continue in, or cease from sin;—whether they shall accept, or reject the offers of mercy;

and whether they shall be saved, or lost. They feel the whole authority of the law and of the gospel, binding them to turn and live, while they realize, that their depravity is not their calamity, but their guilt. And when the preachers of the gospel have thus shown sinners the plague of their own hearts, they may with propriety and force address them in the language of the apostles, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

Humility.

In order to obtain the pardoning mercy of God it is generally believed that sinners must humble themselves in some measure. But it is a serious and interesting question, how low they must fall before their injured and offended Sovereign. Some evangelical and experimental writers have maintained, that they ought to lie as low as their sins deserve, and to be willing that God should treat them according to their demerit. But it seems to be the more common opinion of great and pious divines, that sinners are not obliged to lie so deeply abased before God. These two opinions are not only diverse from, but directly opposite to each other, because there is no medium between sinners being willing, or unwilling, to suffer the due punishment of their sins. The plain and important question now is, which of these opposite opinions is agreeable to truth. And certainly sinners ought to abase themselves as low as their sin deserves. And what sin deserves, let the assembly of divines say. "Sin deserves God's wrath and curse both in this life, and in that which is to come." This answer agrees with what the inspired writers say upon the sub-

ject. The apostle declares, "The wages of sin is death." And our Saviour says, that he will adjudge the finally impenitent to this punishment at the last day.— "Depart from me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Such a punishment every sin deserves, and such a punishment every finally impenitent sinner must forever suffer. All penitent and self-abased sinners must, therefore, be willing to suffer the wrath and curse of God forever. But still it may be inquired what is implied in this willingness.— It does not imply love to pain or misery, but only a love to that benevolent justice, which inflicts it. All the impenitent at the day of judgment, will see the justice of God in casting them off forever, while their hearts will rise in enmity against their holy and righteous Judge, for giving them the due reward of their deeds. But those who are abased for sin, *love that justice* of God, which they see and feel would be displayed, if he should actually treat them according to their demerit. They are, therefore, willing that God should glorify himself by them, either by making them happy, or making them miserable forever. Though they ardently desire to be saved; yet they are willing to give up their own personal good, if the glory of God, which is an infinitely greater good, requires it. Such a willingness, that God should dispose of them for his own glory, is absolutely necessary, in order to accept of pardoning mercy, and, indeed, in order to enjoy the happiness of heaven. For how could they be happy in seeing God treat other sinners according to their deserts, if they were never willing that he should treat them in the same manner? Or how could they say, "Amen, Alleluia," while they saw "the smoke of the torments of the damned ascending forever and ever," if they were never willing to lie down in everlasting sorrow?

Judas and Paul were once both sinners and deserved to be destroyed; Judas for betraying Christ; and Paul for persecuting him in his followers. But Paul was saved and Judas was rejected. Suppose, these two remarkable persons should meet, and Judas should ask Paul, whether he was ever willing that God should cast him off, and treat him according to his deserts? What answer can we suppose, that Paul would give to this pertinent and solemn question? He must say, either that he was, or that he was not, willing that God should cast him off forever. If he should say, that he never was willing that God should cast him off forever; would not Judas reply, Paul, you and I are perfectly agreed in our sentiments and feelings upon this solemn subject, for I was never willing that God should cast me off forever. There is only a circumstantial difference between us. Let God only put me in your place, and you in my place, and I shall love him and praise him as you do, and you will hate and blaspheme him as I do. Could Paul deny these consequences of being unwilling to be cast off forever? But if Paul should say to Judas, I remember the time, when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. I then said, the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. And ever since that time, I have delighted in the law of God after the inward man; and I still delight in it, and would, with my present feelings, delight in it, if I were fixed in your place forever. My heart is essentially different from what it was once, and what yours always was and always will be. I know what it was to be in a condemned state, and to love God for condemning me, I can therefore love God for condemning you as he condemned me, and for casting you off forever, as he might have justly cast me off forever. It is because I have thus cordially accepted the punish-

ment of my iniquity, that I can say, that it is by the grace of God, that I am what I am, and where I am.—So low Paul abased himself, and so low must every one abase himself, in order to be finally exalted.

Self-examination.

The great propensity of mankind to mistake the nature of their moral exercises, and to judge too favourably of themselves, renders self-examination not only proper, but highly necessary. If Christ's first disciples had occasion to examine what spirit they were of, there is reason to think, that all other persons have much more occasion to look into their hearts, and inquire whether they have not been guilty of much self-deception, which is both criminal and dangerous. And if they would discover the truth upon this serious and interesting subject, let them answer some such questions as the following :

Have you an inquisitive spirit respecting the nature of your religious affections, and the true state of your minds? There are many who are very inquisitive about other things, but have no inclination to acquire self-knowledge. They think much and say much about others, who appear to be destitute of vital piety and even moral honesty, while they totally neglect to call themselves to an account, and examine their internal views and feelings. But it is characteristic of good men to make diligent search, and commune with their own hearts. Have you this habitual desire to search and try yourselves, by the infallible rules, which God has given you for this purpose? Or do you live in the total or habitual neglect of this salutary and necessary duty?—A true answer to this query will tend to determine,

whether you are in a state of nature or state of grace, and whether you are growing or declining christians.

Have you examined yourselves impartially? If you examine your hearts ever so frequently, without an impartial and sincere desire to know what they are, you may only increase your self-deception, and become more and more ignorant of your true state and character. It is to be feared, that many first entertain, and afterward support, their hope of being the subjects of a saving change, by a partial and selfish opinion of their religious views and feelings. Their hope originated from a self-righteous spirit, and the same spirit governs them in their self-examination. They have never been willing to know the truth, and never will know it, unless they examine themselves with more impartiality. It concerns you, therefore, to inquire whether you ~~have~~ had a sincere desire to know your own hearts, and ~~have~~ examined them with a real willingness to discover the nature of your affections, and the true state of your souls.

Have you been so much acquainted with the natural deceitfulness of your hearts, as to find the need of critical and frequent self-examination? Many have such a good opinion of their own hearts, as never to call their goodness in question; which is an unhappy sign, that they have never known their native and total depravity. Real christians know, by painful experience, that their hearts, are by nature, deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. They have found the folly and danger of trusting in their good desires, intentions, and resolutions. They have known to their sorrow, that their hearts are like a deceitful bow, always bent to backsliding. This has led them to realize the necessity of watching and examining their hearts with great diligence and impartiality. Has your experience, then, of

the deceitfulness of your hearts led you to the frequent and faithful performance of this duty?

Have you used all the proper means in your power to discover your spiritual state, and the nature of your religious experiences? Perhaps, you have been seriously affected by the word or providence of God. Perhaps, you have seen your exposedness to eternal destruction, and felt great anxiety to escape the wrath to come.— And perhaps, you have been convinced of your just desert of that everlasting punishment, which you feared. But, after all, have you become reconciled to the justice of God in your condemnation? Have you cordially embraced the offers of life, and taken God for your supreme portion? If you have not exercised such love and submission to God, and such dependence upon sovereign grace, your fears and convictions can afford you no just foundation to think, that you have passed from death unto life, and become the heirs of salvation. Now have you compared your views and feelings with the marks of grace in the word of God? Have you read the best books you could get upon experimental religion? Have you conversed freely with judicious christians of your acquaintance? And have you earnestly prayed, that God would search your hearts, and not suffer you to deceive yourselves in the great concerns of your souls?

Finally, have you ever come to a decision respecting your spiritual state? Many choose to live in doubt, rather than to come to a fair and satisfactory conclusion, whether they are, or are not the true friends of God.— This is a dark mark. Real christians are willing to know the truth, whether it be in their favor or against them. They sincerely desire to know whether they are in the path that leads to heaven, or in that which leads to destruction. If they find evidence, that God

has formed them vessels of mercy, they desire to give up themselves publicly to his service, and to walk worthy of their high and holy calling, and to lead others to glorify their heavenly Father. Have you then come to a decision, and found your path clear to do your whole duty?

ANECDOTES.

Happiness.

None are more mistaken than those who imagine happiness consists in extensive riches, splendid retinue, or having a vast number of servants to wait on them.—Bishop Mancini staying once on a visit to Monsieur Poussin till it was dark, Mons. P. took the candle in his hand, lighted him down stairs, and waited upon him to his coach. The prelate was sorry to see him do it himself, and could not help saying, “I very much pity you, Monsieur Poussin, that you have not one servant.” “And I pity you more, my Lord, (replied Poussin,) that you have so many.” Were the happiness of the humble and retired weighed with that of the great, the former, I believe, would abundantly preponderate.

It was a good speech of an Emperor: “You,” said he, “gaze on my purple robe and golden crown; but, did you know what cares are under it, you would not take it up from the ground to have it.” It was a true saying of Augustine: “Many are miserable by loving hurtful things; but they are more miserable by having them.”

One saying to a philosopher, “Couldst thou but please Dionysius, thou needest not eat herbs and roots;” the

philosopher answered, "Couldst thou but eat herbs and roots, thou needest not please Dyonysius." To the humble-minded, temptations to greatness, are no great temptations.

He who would wish to maintain happiness through life, must elevate his mind above those little trifling vexations incident to all. A person having behaved very rudely to Mr. Boswell, he went to Dr. Johnson, and talked of it as a serious distress. Dr. Johnson laughed, and said, "*Consider, Sir, how insignificant this will appear twelve months hence.*" Were this consideration (says Mr. B.) applied to most of the little vexations of life, by which our quiet is too often disturbed, it would prevent many painful sensations. I have tried it frequently, and with good effect.

Dr. Cotton Mather gives the following plain but suitable advice to his son on this head: "It may not be amiss for you to have two heaps; an heap of *unintelligibles*, and an heap of *incurables*. Every now and then you will meet with something or other, that may pretty much distress your thoughts: but the shortest way with the vexations will be, to throw them into the heap they belong to, and be no more distressed about them.

"You will meet with some unaccountable and incomprehensible things, particularly in the conduct of many people. Throw them into your heap of *unintelligibles*; leave them there. Trouble your mind no farther; hope the best, and think no more about them.

"You will meet with some unpersuadable people; no counsel, no reason will do any thing upon the obstinate, especially as to the making of due submissions upon offences. Throw them into the heap of *incurables*; leave them there. And so do you go on to do as you can what you have to do. Let not the crooked things that cannot be made strait encumber you."

POETRY.

Judgment.

Lo, he comes, array'd in veng'ance,
Riding down the heav'nly road ;
Floods of fury roll before him—
Who can meet an angry God ?
Tremble, sinners,
Who can stand before his rod ?

Lo, he comes in glory shining :
Saints, arise and meet your king !
Glorious captain of salvation,
Welcome, welcome, hear them sing !
Shouts of triumph
Make the heav'ns with echoes ring !

Now despisers, look and wonder !
Hear the dreadful sound, depart,
Rattling like a peal of thunder,
'Thro' each guilty rebel's heart !
Lost forever,
Hope and sinners here must part !

Still they hear the awful sentence,
Hell resounds the dreadful roar ;
While their heart-strings twinge with anguish,
Trembling on the burning shore !
Justice seals it—
Down they sink to rise no more !

How they shrink, with horror viewing
Hell's deep caverns opening wide !
Guilty thoughts, like ghosts pursuing,
Plunge them down the rolling tide !

Now consider,
Ye who scorn the Lamb that dy'd !

Hark ! ten thousand harps resounding !
Form'd in bright and grand array ;
See the glorious armies rising,
While their captain leads the way !
Heav'n before them
Opens an eternal day.

Rich Man and Lazarus.

In what confusion earth appears !
God's dearest children bath'd in tears ;
While they who heav'n itself deride,
Riot in luxury and pride.

But, patient, let my soul attend,
And ere I censure, view the end :
That end, how diff'rent, who can tell
The wide extremes of heav'n and hell ?

See the red flames around him twine,
Who did in gold and purple shine !
Nor can his tongue one drop obtain,
T' allay the scorching of his pain.

While round the saint, so poor below,
Full rivers of salvation flow ;
On Abrah'm's breast he leans his head,
And banquets on celestial bread.

Jesus, my Lord, let me appear
The meanest of my servants here ;
So that at length I may but taste
The blessings of thy marriage-feast.



to the patron and readers of the *Christian Pioneer*.

We close the *Pioneer* with the present number, not because we cease to feel as heretofore in the objects of the publication; nor because we do not feel a tender and affectionate regard for your temporal and eternal happiness. But we close it with the hope and prospect, that it will be succeeded by a more interesting and valuable publication, entitled *The Christian Magazine*. This proposed publication we respectfully recommend to your consideration and patronage. The particulars are as follow:

Proposed Publication

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE, DEVOTED TO

THE CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

BY MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

Every one who has ever seen the *Pioneer*, and reflecting upon the general and spiritual condition of the nation, the question, "What shall we do?" must be presented to his mind, and important. It is the object of the proposed publication, which is now under consideration, to answer to this question. The most important points, both of church doctrine and practical duty, shall be treated, as discussed in the *Christian Magazine*. Although this work is designed to be generally religious, yet a variety of the papers will be appropriated to extracts from the writings of distinguished authors, history and biography, natural and political history of our country, with the most recent and important religious intelligence, which will also find a place in its pages. Those who are conversant with the contemporary publications will observe, in their perusal of this, there will find one themselves the objects to pursue it will be more in future to determine.

CONSTITUTION.

1. The *Christian Magazine* shall contain 32 entire pages, be executed as it respects type and paper in the style of the *Christian Pioneer*, and allowed to subscribers at \$1.00 a volume, payable in advance, or \$1 paid at the end of six months.

2. It shall be published in Providence, R. I. every month, commencing with January next.

3. Those who become responsible for twenty-five copies or more, shall receive them at \$1 a volume. Those who become responsible for ten and under twenty-five, shall receive them at \$1.12 1/2 cts. and those responsible for more than ten and under ten at \$1.25.

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